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THOUGHTS ON THE AMERICAN SYSTEM

THE EDITORS

RÉGIS DEBRAY REPLIES

Indian Revolutionary Potential

KATHLEEN GOUGH

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EDITORS: Paul M. Sweezy and Leo Huberman (1903-1968)

NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

In this issue we publish the first of a new kind of article: Kathleen Gough's "The Indian Revolutionary Potential" which begins on page 23. What is new about it is that it is a condensation by the author herself of a much longer, fully documented article which appeared in a specialized scholarly journal (Kathleen Gough Aberle, "Peasant Resistance and Revolt in South India," *Pacific Affairs,* Winter 1968-1969, pp. 526-544). Our purpose in initiating this series is to help radical scholars to solve a problem whch we know has bothered at least a few of them: how can they present their research results and ideas to two different audiences—their professional colleagues and the general nonspecialized but in many cases equally interested type of left-wing readership reached by MR?

(*Continued on inside back cover*)

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THOUGHTS ON THE AMERICAN SYSTEM

A change of administration usually provides useful insights into the nature and mode of functioning of the U.S. social order, and in this respect the accession to power of the Nixon regime is no exception.

First of all, we can see from Nixon's cabinet appointments how monopoly capitalism tends to rely increasingly for its top functionaries and administrators on men whose chief training and experience have been either in managing and manipulating capital in its most abstract forms or in servicing the system as a whole. In the former category we include bankers and corporation lawyers, in the latter university professors. The Nixon cabinet—counting as members the director of the budget bureau and the presidential assistants in the fields of national security and urban affairs—contains two Wall Street lawyers, three bankers, and four professors, altogether nine out of the total of fifteen. Of the remaining six, four rose to the top as businessmen and only two as politicians. What appear likely to be the four key policy-making positions—Attorney General and the Secretaries of State, Defense, and Treasury—are occupied by two lawyers, one politician, and one banker. On the whole, the "generalists," in the sense of those whose main concern has been the system as a whole rather than specific interests within the system, appear to be firmly in the saddle. And this both reflects and is in accord with the nature of an economy that is increasingly dominated by a few hundred giant multinational corporations which need a government to serve their common interests both at home and abroad much more than they need a

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government which favors some sectors of the economy or regions of the country at the expense of others.

Secondly, the composition of the Nixon cabinet clearly shows up the artificiality of the theory, expounded by C. Wright Mills,* that there are separate business and political "domains" each with its own "elite." The very fact that sixty percent of the cabinet members have essentially business backgrounds is in conflict with the theory of a separate political domain. Furthermore, most of this substantial majority have had extensive previous governmental experience. The new Secretary of the Treasury, Chairman of the biggest bank in Chicago, started off as an official of the Federal Reserve System; the new Secretary of State, a Wall Street lawyer, served as Attorney General under Eisenhower; three of four businessmen appointed to lesser cabinet posts have been state governors; and so on.

It is of course true that there are corporate and government bureaucracies between which there may be, *on the whole,* relatively little mobility; and in this sense one can speak of separate business and political domains. But at the top levels, men move back and forth between the two with the greatest of ease, so that it is not possible to speak of separate "elites" generated within the two domains. Many, perhaps even most, top positions in politics are filled by people who made it in business. And people who make it in politics usually find many lucrative jobs in business open to them (Nixon himself is a good example of this: in 1962 he temporarily abandoned a political career for the senior partnership in one of the big Wall Street law firms). What we find at the top, in other words, is a small ruling *class* whose members either themselves occupy the positions of power or select and hence control those who do. And these members and their positions are essentially interchangeable.

While we are on the subject of elites, there is another aspect of C. Wright Mills's theory which is in need of re-examination in the light of the experience of the last few years. In his schema there are not just two domains with their elites but three—corporate, political, and military. At the time Mills's book ap-

* In *The Power Elite,* New York, 1956.

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peared (1956), we had no hesitation in rejecting the idea for the military as well as for the corporate and political.* In the long sweep of American history, the constitutional principle of civilian control over the military had never been successfully challenged. What this principle means of course is that the military, like the police, is an instrument of the ruling class and not an independent center of power: its job is to do what it is told to, leaving policy-making to the representatives of the bourgeoisie. The showdown between President Truman and General MacArthur over the limits and aims of the Korean War showed that the principle of civilian control had survived the Second World War, the beginnings of the Cold War, and the Korean War. But this same incident also revealed a powerful tendency within the military to assert itself as a policy-making center. And there is no question that the massive military buildup of the Kennedy-Johnson era plus the increasing U.S. involvement in the Vietnamese War have greatly strengthened the hand of the military. The question is whether this process has gone so far that the military is now in a position to enforce its will on the civilian leadership with respect to matters which the military regards as its own particular concern. If the answer is yes, it would follow that Mills's theory of a military elite sharing power has validity, regardless of whether we accept or reject the notion of separate corporate and political elites. For there is no doubt that there is such a thing as a military domain in Mills's sense, or that it does select and train its own leadership: making it in business or politics does not provide a ticket of admission to the Top Brass.**

The composition of the Nixon administration does not provide any convincing clues to the answer to this question. It is certainly interesting that for the first time since its creation immediately after the Second World War, the Department of De-

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* See Paul M. Sweezy, "Power Elite or Ruling Class?," MR, September, 1956, esp. pp. 144-146.

** It is true, however, that retiring generals and admirals are much in demand for leading corporate and political positions. This one-way mobility into the top echelon of the civilian ruling class works against the military's acquiring its own specific values and ambitions.

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fense has been put in charge of a politician. Since Truman's administration, this post has been held by the president or board chairman of the following corporations: General Motors, Proctor and Gamble, Morgan Guaranty Trust, and Ford. In other words, the Department of Defense has normally been in charge of a top executive of one of the country's biggest corporations, the kind of person who could presumably most effectively enforce civilian control on the military. The fact that Nixon has chosen as his Secretary of Defense a small-town Middle Western politician with notoriously hawkish views,* suggests an intention to give the military its head.

But this is not the only possible hypothesis. It might also be reasoned that the U.S. ruling class has decided to put an end to the war in Vietnam and that this decision can be made more palatable to hawks, both in and out of the Pentagon, if one of their own is given major responsibility for implementing it and coping with its consequences.** This line of reasoning of course assumes that real power is entirely in civilian hands.

What makes it so difficult to establish the truth here is the fact that there is in any case such a wide area of agreement between the leadership of the giant corporations and the military elite. Both *want* a huge war machine, but the former *needs* it even more than the latter. This need is based on both international and domestic considerations. The defense of the U.S. empire, alias the "free world," is quite literally a life-and-death matter for a large number of the biggest corporations; and for the entire ruling class massive (and growing) government spending on the war machine is the only acceptable form of surplus utilization on the scale required to keep the U.S. economy from

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* For a thumb-nail sketch of Laird's ideas on U.S. global strategy, see *I. F. Stone's Weekly,* December 30, 1968.

** Writing of French withdrawal from Algeria, Maxime Rodinson comments: "As usually happens, the capitulation to Algerian nationalism, so wounding to the national pride and so harmful to the interests of a large number of Frenchmen, could only be made acceptable by a right-wing government, or at least one which could not be accused of sacrificing the nation to some universalist ideology. This was the historic role of Charles de Gaulle. . . ." *Israel and the Arabs,* London, 1968, p. 137. (An American edition of Rodinson's book is scheduled to be published in New York on January 23rd.)

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sinking back into the kind of stagnation and mass unemployment which characterized the years of the Great Depression. It follows that the mere fact that the military gets practically everything it asks for in no way proves that it is an independent power center. The ruling class built the war machine up from the low point to which it was reduced by the hasty demobilization right after the Second World War, to serve its own global purposes and not to please the generals and admirals. The question whether, in the process, the generals and admirals have acquired real power in their own right is therefore not one which can be answered according to any simple criteria of size and rate of growth of the war machine.

A real test may come over the issue of ending the Vietnam War. If, as seems to be widely assumed, the ruling class is now ready to write Vietnam off, it may well meet bitter resistance from the military, determined to hang on at the cost of endless fighting and possibly even of war with China. In this way a power struggle might be precipitated, the outcome of which would decide whether or not the traditional American principle of civilian control over the military is still in operation.

Whether this will actually happen, however, is another question. What is at issue is not whether the ruling class *wants* to end the Vietnam War (of course it does), but whether it is now ready to do so on the only terms which can bring peace to that country. These terms have long been well known to those who are not blinded by class interests and ideology: complete withdrawal of U.S. armed forces from Vietnam. This of course implies the end of the Saigon puppet regime and the takeover of power in all of South Vietnam by the National Liberation Front (and its allies) which is already in control of most of the countryside. What evidence is there that the U.S. ruling class has reconciled itself to this prospect?

If there is any such evidence, we frankly do not know what it is. The actual course of events has proved that Johnson's withdrawal from the presidential race and subsequent opening of negotiations with Hanoi together constituted an extremely effective method of undermining and disorienting the domestic

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anti-war movement. It seems only reasonable, therefore, to assume that this, rather than peace, was the intended purpose. And of course Nixon is not going to abandon such a well-tested tactic: it seems that Americans by and large are willing to tolerate and perhaps even support the war if it is accompanied by sufficiently well advertised "peace" talks.* Meanwhile, all the pronouncements we have run across emanating from what may be called "responsible" ruling-class quarters continue to take it for granted that South Vietnam, with or without the present Saigon regime, will remain a U.S. client state after the war is over. This is true even of statements, like the well publicized one by McGeorge Bundy a couple of months ago, which appear to be most emphatic on the overriding need to end the war. The U.S. ruling class, it seems, simply has not absorbed the lesson of the last fifteen years, that it is impossible to establish a viable neo-colony in South Vietnam.

This does not mean, to be sure, that the lesson never will be learned or, even if it isn't, that U.S. forces will remain in Vietnam forever. But "never" and "forever" are not very precise terms and certainly do not rule out a long period of maneuvering by the United States to find a way to impose its will on Vietnam. Already we are being bombarded once again with optimistic stories, coming from both Saigon and Washington, about how well the war is going, how many villages and districts have been pacified, how rapidly the morale of the Saigon troops is rising and that of the NLF falling, and so on *ad nauseam*. What seems to be happening in fact is that U.S. and puppet forces are withdrawing more and more into fortified bases and urban enclaves (the latter increasingly infiltrated by enemy cadres), while the NLF-held countryside is subjected to stepped-up B-52 bombing. If this is correct, it means that the U.S. is actually adopting, without acknowledging it, the so-called enclave strategy which

* From the point of view of strengthening the anti-war movement in the United States, the best thing that could happen would be for the Vietnamese to pack up and leave the Paris talks, telling the U.S. delegation to let them know when Washington is ready for serious negotiations. That the Vietnamese do not do this is due to the fact that they have more important aims than strengthening the U.S. anti-war movement, chief of which is to hasten the disintegration of what is left of the Saigon regime.

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has been advocated in the last few years by such men as Generals Gavin and Ridgway, Messrs. Kennan and Galbraith, and Senators Fulbright and McGovern.

How long this will go on is a question no one can answer. Presumably it *can* go on for a long time yet: even Wilfred Burchett, the leading English-speaking reporter and analyst of Vietnamese victories, does not assert, in his writings in the *Guardian* and his new book *Vietnam Will Win!,* that the Vietnamese are in a position literally to throw the U.S. forces out of Vietnam. They will leave Vietnam only when a decision is taken in Washington to pull them out. And what combination of pressures—from new "Tet offensives" in South Vietnam, from military explosions in other parts of the world, from renewed international monetary crises, from rising urban rebellions at home, from a revived anti-war movement inside the United States—will convince the U.S. ruling class that the Vietnam game is not worth the candle, this too is a question no one can answer. If and when the time does arrive, the next problem facing the ruling class may be to try to persuade its own military to go along.

If that happens we shall at any rate have a real test of the theory that the military has become an independent power center in U.S. society.

Let us now turn to another aspect of the American system, the internal power structure. In matters of international and military policy there is no doubt that all power is in the hands of the federal government and, within the federal government, increasingly in the hands of the executive branch. (We say "increasingly," but "exclusively" might be more accurate: it is hard to cite an instance in recent years in which the Senate or the Congress as a whole has had a visible influence in shaping foreign or military policies.) In domestic affairs the situation is different and much more complicated.

To begin with, we must bear in mind that the governmental structure of the United States makes a sharp distinction between the federal government on the one hand and the state and local governments on the other. While the distribution of functions

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among the different levels cannot be precisely defined, and indeed is subject to continuous dispute and recurring judicial determination, nevertheless each level does have a large area of responsibility in which it makes and carries out policy in relative independence of the others. The dangers inherent in this system are obvious: unless the same interests hold power at all three levels, discordant or even contradictory policies may be adopted, resulting in serious impairment of the functioning of the system as a whole.

How is it in the United States today: do the same interests hold power at all three levels? (It is worth noting in passing that in most of the other advanced capitalist countries this problem does not arise since the central government directly controls the regional and local governments.) In a very general sense, yes: large property-owners or their representatives hold power at all three levels. They are all therefore interested in maintaining the system and in maximizing U.S. power and wealth vis-à-vis the rest of the world. This explains why, on matters of foreign and military policy, there is normally general agreement among the various sections of the ruling class: the corporate rich in control of the central government pursue their collective interests with the enthusiastic support of their lesser colleagues in the regions and localities.

When it comes to the state and local governments, however, things are not so simple. The headquarters of the economically dominant giant corporations are concentrated in New York and a few other major cities, and the political activities of their top leaders are for the most part concerned with national and international affairs: typically, they play little or no role in state and local politics. Further down the corporate ladder there is a tremendous amount of mobility of both the job and the geographical varieties. The college or university graduate who goes to work for one of the multinational giants can expect to be shifted around from one branch or plant to another, nationally and even internationally, not once but repeatedly in the course of his corporate career. The result is that he never settles in any community long enough to put down roots; he never gains the intimate first-hand acquaintance with local people and problems

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without which it is impossible to be politically effective. Of course the giants can and do achieve a measure of political influence at state and local levels through spending money, directly in some cases but more often through their officials, in support of particular politicians or political machines. If they were the only sources of big money for these purposes, they could doubtless achieve outright control of state and local governments. But this is very far from being the case. In every community of any size there are rich, and often very rich, men and women whose primary source of income is ownership of property which is situated and controlled right where they live—family businesses, construction companies, local banks, above all real estate. These people can well afford their own politicians and political machines, and of course it is important to them for a thousand and one reasons to control the governments which are closest to their operations. Given the fact that their local experience and connections are vastly superior to those of the absentee corporate owners and managers, it is not surprising that they pretty well monopolize power at the state and local levels.

We thus have a situation in which the corporate giants control the federal government, and locally based vested interests control the state and local governments. Throughout most of the period when this arrangement has been in operation—i.e. since the rise of Big Business in the last decades of the 19th century—it has worked reasonably well for the power-wielders at both levels. The giants, in fact, have for the most part been happy to chase after the profits offered by expanding national and international markets without having to worry about running everything down below. But in recent years inner conflicts and contradictions have been developing which greatly complicate the growing general crisis of U.S. monopoly capitalism.

To understand this one must recall some of the major features of the capital accumulation process in the present phase of U.S. economic development. The greater profitability of the corporate giants provides them with the wherewithal to grow more rapidly than the smaller and more competitive sectors of the economy (this is what Marx called the concentration of capital), and their huge financial resources give them the lever-

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age to engineer an uninterrupted series of mergers (Marx's centralization of capital). Technologically, this increasingly dominant monopolistic sector of the economy is highly dynamic, with a strong bias toward more and more sophisticated, capital-intensive methods of production. The big monopolies, in their search for profitable markets, make available to other sectors of the economy advanced mechanical, electronic, chemical, and other sophisticated devices which in turn revolutionize these sectors' methods of production. In this way, for example, U.S. agriculture has been rapidly mechanized (and chemicalized); and hand labor of the "ditch-digging" type has been virtually eliminated from the construction industry.

These trends and tendencies, together with related developments in such fields as transportation and communication, have had a profound impact on the location of economic activity, the nature of the labor process, and the composition of the work force. Some production centers—particularly in the South, Southwest, and Far West—have burgeoned. The countryside has been drastically depopulated, with displaced farm workers crowding into the cities. Inside the metropolitan areas population has moved steadily out from the city centers to an ever widening periphery, leaving the bottom income groups in decaying slum areas which also tend to expand outward with the increase of population and the growth of the metropolitan area. These slum dwellers in turn are made up of a hereditary lumpenproletariat plus the steadily swelling ranks of rejects from the high-technology economy: migrants from the countryside and technologically unemployed and/or unemployable in the industrial and service sectors. When you add the historically conditioned facts that a large proportion of the central-city low-income stratum is made up of ghettoized blacks (on a nation-wide scale) and Puerto Ricans and Mexican-Americans (in certain regions), and that these are the sectors of the U.S. population which are being awakened and stirred into action by the world-wide anti-imperialist revolution of the 20th century—when you add all this up, you have the ingredients of the two great interlocked crises which are widely recognized as threatening to tear apart the very fabric of U.S. society—the crisis of the cities and the

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crisis of race relations.

From a narrowly economic point of view these dramatic developments are of little concern to the corporate giants. They have not suffered in any discernible way from the trials and tribulations of the cities: corporate profits after taxes rose from $26.7 billion in 1960 to $48.1 billion in 1967, an average annual increase of more than 10 percent a year. The multinationals have been spreading their tentacles around the globe as never before. Furthermore, the big corporations don't operate in the slums (most of their executives have probably never even been in a slum), nor do they need the kind of unskilled low-paid labor which is available there. The truth is that for corporations which operate on the national and international levels, the problems of the impoverished inner cities are economically irrelevant.

The same cannot be said politically, however. Anything that threatens to disrupt the whole social order, as the urban and race crises unquestionably do, is very much a matter of concern to the corporate giants and the national ruling class which they nurture: they need an environment of civic peace and stability in which to carry on their profitable economic activities. But the question is: what can they do to secure and protect such an environment? And here we meet again what has by now clearly become a major contradiction of the American system.

The big corporations and the national ruling class do not control the state and local governments.* Most of what would be necessary to make serious improvements in the cities and to ameliorate racial conflict and rebelliousness within the cities would have to be done at the metropolitan level. Those local property owners who do control the state and local governments, unlike the big corporations, have an enormous stake in the slums and ghettos (as markets, high-yield real estate, sources of cheap

* The entrance into state politics of men like Governor Nelson Rockefeller of New York and his brother Governor Winthrop Rockefeller of Arkansas may indicate that the national ruling class is trying to take over key positions at the lower levels. The effectiveness of this strategy is doubtful, however. Even a governor or mayor can accomplish little against the vested interests which control state legislatures, city councils, and state and local bureaucracies.

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labor for marginal businesses and domestic workers, etc.) and have absolutely no intention to sacrifice what are to them vital interests for the sake of creating an environment favorable to the operations of the big corporations and the national ruling class. What is at issue here is very clearly indicated by Hans Blumenfeld, one of the world's leading authorities in the field of urban planning. Writing in an article entitled "The Modern Metropolis" (*Scientific American,* September, 1965), Blumenfeld draws the following conclusion:

> Any plan that seeks to control the growth of the metropolis rather than leaving it to the play of market forces will require the setting up of new forms of control. Because it inevitably entails transfers of value from one piece of land to another, planning of any sort is bound to come into conflict with the existing vested interests of landowners and municipalities. It is obvious, therefore, that the implementation of rational regional planning would call for: (1) the creation of an overall metropolitan government for the metropolis, (2) public ownership of all or most of the land that is to be developed, (3) tax revenues sufficient to enable the metropolitan government to acquire the land and carry out the public works required for its development, (4) a national housing policy that would eliminate segregation by providing people at all income levels with freedom of choice in the location of their dwellings.
>
> In terms of current American political folklore these are radical measures. Each of them, however, has been carried out in varying forms and to a varying degree by more than one European nation within the framework of democratic capitalism.

The reason European capitalist nations have been able to carry out such programs is simply that their ruling classes, which are responsible for their national systems as a whole, are in control of regional and local governments. The U.S. ruling class, on the other hand, is saddled with a governmental structure which confers power at the regional and local levels on particularistic interests which have no responsibility for the system as a whole.

In these circumstances urban development will continue to be governed by market forces and to generate conflicts—the current one over New York City's educational system is a good example—which, from the point of view of U.S. monopoly capi-

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talism as a national and international system of making profits and accumulating capital, are totally irrational and destructive.

The national ruling class is obviously extremely reluctant to meet this problem head-on, fearing that any wholesale attack on local vested interests (political as well as economic) would set off even more destructive and dangerous conflicts. So it temporizes, trying to bribe and cajole local power-holders through such devices as federal departments of urban affairs and transportation, Ford Foundations, university institutes of city planning, and the like. The results, as should by now be obvious, have been and will continue to be minimal.

Sooner or later it seems inevitable that more drastic measures will be tried: the problem itself is bound to get steadily worse. But what these measures may be it is now impossible to foresee.

(January 12, 1969)

Such poverty as we have today in all our great cities degrades the poor, and infects with its degradation the whole neighborhood in which they live. And whatever can degrade a neighborhood can degrade a country and a continent and finally the whole civilized world, which is only a large neighborhood. Its bad effects cannot be escaped by the rich. When poverty produces outbreaks of virulent infectious disease, as it always does sooner or later, the rich catch the disease and see their children die of it. When it produces crime and violence the rich go in fear of both, and are put to a good deal of expense to protect their persons and property. When it produces bad manners and bad language the children of the rich pick them up no matter how carefully they are secluded; and such seclusion as they get does them more harm than good. . . . The old notion that people can "keep to themselves" and not be touched by what is happening to their neighbors, or even to the people who live a hundred miles off, is a most dangerous mistake.

—*George Bernard Shaw*

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A REPLY

BY REGIS DEBRAY

The following is a translation of a document which reached the New York MR office late in December. It would perhaps have been desirable to send copies to all contributors to the special July-August issue, to which Debray's letter is a reply, affording an opportunity for any rejoinders they might care to make. But this would have entailed a long delay in publishing a document which, for reasons outside the control of all concerned, is already five months old. We therefore decided to publish it at once and herewith to offer space in future issues to the authors of *Regis Debray and the Latin American Revolution*. The translation of Debray's letter is by Mary Klopper.—Ed.

Camiri, September

Dear Huberman and Sweezy,

I have heard that you devoted the summer issue of MONTHLY REVIEW to me. Frankly, the minor texts on Latin America which I wrote in the past did not merit such an honor. Their quality did not warrant close study and attention from such men as yourselves, Gunder Frank, Pomeroy, Blackburn and Anderson, and your other contributors. I am not saying this in deference to the conventions of epistolary modesty but only to dispel a misapprehension and state a matter of fact. The level of theoretical work varies according to its aims, the form it takes, and the distance separating it from current events. In the case of *Revolution in the Revolution?* this distance was reduced to an absolute minimum. It is simply a political tract containing extreme abbreviations and intentionally abrupt short-cuts; a tract which is in itself an ideological short-cut imposed by its practical context. It had only one ambition: to play a part in breaking down a mental, theoretical, and practical block hindering the upsurge of the revolutionary armed struggle where, and only where, it was then under way; and to lift what might be called an historical ban by an aggressive and crude formulation of that which the ban was only just able to hold in check.

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Finally, by going to the limit, I wanted to sharpen rather than cut short a debate which was then fermenting in all revolutionary circles. Thus the context: a particular polemic. What was it?

When I drafted the booklet, the specific question of the antagonism People's War/Communist Parties had arisen in a polemic form for comrades in specific countries—Venezuela and Guatemala—and in a specific period, from approximately 1964 onward. This question was suspect and disconcerting because historically new; and wherever it was posed by events, it crystallized the most important facet of the contradiction between the reformist line and the consistent [*consequente*] line. Thus it became the vital question within the armed revolutionary movement in the precise sense that the very life or death of the movement depended upon its solution. This question presented itself in a concrete form only to the militants of those countries (possibly also in Colombia in a latent form, but of that I had no direct knowledge), and, for them, it was posed in terms of organization and political line. It was not, however, a matter of indifference to the militants of other countries where the class struggle was taking place at a lower level, for they in their turn were in danger of confronting similar contradictions.

It seemed to some comrades that in spite of the objective situational differences between the Cuba of 1957 and their countries in 1967—differences which can never be sufficiently stressed, adequately defined, or given too much weight—there was in the Cuban experience, *mutatis mutandi,* some basis for a better understanding of this antagonism, at least enough so that one should not relegate that experience out of hand to the prehistory of the present anti-imperialist struggle. What was required was to throw the light of these experiences one upon the other, to compare failures and successes, differences and similarities, so as to bring to light the lessons to be drawn from them.

Why then so many references to the history of the Cuban Revolution? Because it was paradoxically both the least known and the most talked about, and at the same time the easiest to handle for its being an accomplished fact. It is a ridiculous and aberrant idea to make Cuba into a "model" or basic type to be

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brought out in several editions either by reproduction or exact copying. The knowing critic who went into battle with spear and shield against this idea would deserve as much respect as the Knight of La Mancha bestriding Rosinante to defy windmills, or anyone else who nobly wastes his time, but certainly no more. Everyone knows that the irony of "universal history" lies in its habit of disturbing settled customs and breaking out into the unexpected, advancing from the wrong direction—that is, the direction on which the learned have turned their backs. The idea of a model, blueprint, or strait jacket is obviously anti-historical. It is obviously anti-materialist, basically Platonic; two good reasons why historical materialists should always be on guard against it. It is true, however, that all of us, Marxists included, are more or less Platonists and that three thousand years of theological idealism cannot be eradicated overnight from the human brain.

To some extent a collective effort, *Revolution in the Revolution?* was an attempt to rediscover a new coherence behind apparent old-style aberrations [*retrouver une nouvelle coherence sous les apparentes derogations à l'ancienne*] in a minor work for particular circumstances. The ideas it contained had been in the air for some time, debated daily by many comrades, events often deciding the outcome for us before we could do so. Of course I continue to take full responsibility for it, including any errors; but I believe that we thought it and wrote it together and that I only put it into some sort of order. This is why you will find the essence of these ideas in other manifestoes, analyses, or appeals but expressed with more force and precision. These deserve to be more widely known than my pamphlet because they have solid socio-economic foundations and what Lenin described as "the superior dignity of immediate reality." Amongst others I am thinking of the analysis made by Orlando Fernandez last year on "the situation and perspectives of the Guatemalan revolutionary movement," the most recent statement by the Guatemalan FAR, that of César Montes, etc.

It is in this concrete situation and arising from it that there may be some meaning in the booklet to which you have been kind enough to pay so much attention. In quantitative terms of

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geographical space and "journalistic" importance it is very limited, but it is exemplary by its nature and in no way exclusive; an example is not a model! If this body of new ideas were to be transposed from one specific set of historical conditions to another, for instance from certain Latin American countries where it has its roots to the United States or Western Europe, there would of course be a danger of emptying it of its practical meaning, of reducing what it affirms as a revolutionary policy to something that appears as pantomime or simply romantic radicalism. But that is a phenomenon of social diffusion which has its own laws, and propagation would not be so rapid or so easy if the traditional ideological climate were more resistant. The origin, strength, and persistence of this uncontrollable social diffusion lies in the dramatic inability of the European Communist movement, East and West, to diffuse any living idea, so that it is like a lung gasping for air. It is powerless to propose anything, to make itself felt, or to lead. In the final analysis, this is the failure of the European socialist system to establish anything beyond what it is—a politico-economic system—something like a new civilization, an autonomous and consistent source of social values, or an evaluation of man different from that made by capitalism. But all that is a horse of a different color [*harina de otro costal*].

To return to the criticisms which I think you are addressing to me, they seem to me to be perfectly correct in themselves but to depend in this case on a misunderstanding. I mean the misunderstanding which translates into deficiencies in a narrow and specialized work (such as *Revolution in the Revolution?*) everything which too broad and exacting a reading failed to find in it.

(1) It is very clear that this booklet omits an analysis of the modes and relations of production prevalent in Latin America today, as well as of the patterns and class structures arising from them. This omission is so obvious as to leave no doubt that such an analysis was neither the purpose nor the subject of the work. Unless the concrete realities were to be prejudged, and the single formula "Latin America in General," far too abstract and pure to be real, were to be superimposed on it, such

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an analysis could only come after a series of empirical studies of separate national situations. As far as I can remember, *Revolution in the Revolution?* does not depreciate or repudiate this kind of analysis (how could a Marxist do so?) but simply puts it aside by provisionally taking it for granted. It is one thing, however, to observe that this analysis is not there, neither stated nor developed, and quite another to conclude that because it is not there, the author thinks it should not be there (that one can do without it) or that it could not be there (that it would be out of place). Having said this, I think it is also obvious that it is desirable to study in detail what was put aside, that one cannot rest on something provisional. I am convinced that such a basic study is the more necessary and urgent because too much was sacrificed to that other urgency, the urgency of immediate practice at any price. The order of the day is to perform the thankless and fragmentary tasks of theoretical research and historical, economic, and social investigation, using well-proved concepts and not agitational formulas. Let us not forget, however, that even if we were in the utopian situation of having completed these tasks, the results would not in themselves suffice to fix a line of political action, as one would draw a conclusion from a set of premises, still less to ensure success. Reality is rational but what is possible is never entirely so, except in the mathematical abstraction of the theory of games of chance which is, perhaps, applicable to that game, amusement, or abstraction for computers that is thermonuclear war. It is certainly not applicable to class struggle and people's war, which are real and serious matters! The logic, in any event, is not that of Aristotle or even Spinoza. When real conditions have been assessed, a strategic choice is, in the last resort, still required to derive from them a conscious political line; the determination of the masses and leaders of genius are still prerequisites for the success of a revolutionary line.

(2) It was the purpose of *Revolution in the Revolution?* to show that in specific conditions, when the armed struggle is under way, the separation of the political from the military becomes artificial and dangerous and that the political can then be expressed mainly in a military form. This does not, of course,

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mean exclusively! It is therefore one thing to point out that this booklet, devoted to describing precisely these specific conditions, stresses matters which appear to be purely military or "technical." I think it is quite another to postulate that it places excessive weight on military questions to the exclusion of political questions, work among the masses, trade unions, and ideological and political struggles throughout the whole revolutionary process at all times and places!! It is unnecessary to take such an infantile exaggeration seriously.

(3) It was not the purpose of *Revolution in the Revolution?* to examine the conditions which would make possible the development of armed struggle in Latin America, but to make a brief study of a few movements of armed struggle as they had in fact developed during the previous decade. Thus the pamphlet is not concerned with the question of "whether conditions are ripe or not" but with what happens where they are ripe, sufficiently at least to give rise to an organized armed struggle. From what has happened and is happening one must draw lessons for what will happen in the future, for nowadays men are endowed with consciousness and social science, and seek to know what history they are making, since they are aware that they are making history, even if only by doing nothing.

So one comes back to the idea of a model, immediately rejected as an explicit attempt to impose a pattern from which tracings are to be made—a pattern drawn from a specific localized past, tracings depicting a future everywhere. Yet I wonder—it is a question I often ask myself—if this idea does not command our acceptance in spite of ourselves, like a fatality, a compulsion of the Marxist method, and not only the Marxist method since it is to some extent the question in all sociology? Quite apart from their correctness, or the rigor of the method used, is it possible to present these lessons drawn from "what is happening" in a raw and neutral state? Do they not themselves take on the force of a law? Can one purge objective studies of revolutionary phenomena of all normative commitments for the future? What sort of law is involved: natural ("constant relation between two series of phenomena") or civil and ethical ("what ought to be the ideal"); or the two together

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("that which cannot be" being also "that which ought to be for me")? At what point does one pass from a descriptive analysis of given developments to the fixing of a rule valid for prospective and future developments (at least in law)? Is there a transition from fact to value, and at what moment does it occur? The ambiguity of these rather academic questions touches perhaps on the ambiguity of the status, at once philosophical and social, of Marxism. It is a theory which has a clear title to being scientific, linked as it is to a critical philosophy (critical of itself as well as of others, wherein lies its superiority). Is it not also an ideology? Is this ideology not conceived both as the object of voluntary individual adherence and as the "natural" expression of a social class, the proletariat? Can this science not also, at worst, become a religious dogma, an object of faith, resembling its historical predecessors in exuding its orthodoxy, its rites, its encyclicals, its vigilantes of morality, its codes of right-thinking—all of which, moreover, become more and more fossilized and pitiful?

You will say that I am getting off the subject. Not at all: here it is again. I was sentenced to thirty years imprisonment with this booklet serving as an essential piece of evidence for the prosecution, its contents being the main item in the indictment. The argument went as follows: this contains the analysis of operations, tactics, and organization (we skip the illogicality here) which cannot fail to be those of the guerrilla movement in Latin America. The Bolivian guerrilla movement (though led by Che Guevara) operated in this way, used these tactics, and adopted this organization. (The question as to whether it could have done otherwise was not asked.) Hence the author of this booklet is "the intellectual author" of the Bolivian guerrilla movement and of its "crimes." As a criminal he deserves the maximum sentence, etc., etc. You will, doubtless, think that imperialism had more solid reasons for putting me out of the way, but what strikes me is that this curious fallacious argument was at the center of the debate and provided the basis for my conviction. This fallacious argument was the harder to refute since, in the last analysis, it rests on a contradiction which is close to the heart of Marxism (it is true that this was mediated in a way

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not always perceptible to the officers of the tribunal, under pressure to uncover the facts). This contradiction seems to live in all of Marxism's philosophical and political progeny, in those recurrent debates between mechanism and voluntarism, respect for economics and exaltation of conscience, Marxism as science and Marxism as humanism, the Marx of *Capital* and the young Marx of the *Manuscripts,* etc.

To return to the theme of this letter and the issue of your magazine, let us conclude that my booklets and articles willingly assume this ambivalence of the descriptive and the normative, of real events and the "model." It is appropriate to any political theory formulated by a militant and seen as one facet of an operation in progress. By force of circumstance these papers were in a sense intended as a contribution to the organization of the revolutionary struggle but, nonetheless, remain based purely and simply on the lessons of experience and therefore open to contradiction by experience.

(4) The so-called *foco* theory in its simplest, most skeletal form of an isolated military detonator organized by itself, independent of any national organization or urban political work, is certainly a utopian notion. It is not a coherent revolutionary line capable of assuming the complex tasks of political leadership and organization in a concrete situation. It is one thing (and an easy one) to demolish this supposed theory and quite another to use this as a pretext to reject the "people's war"—that complex and inescapable reality—of which guerrilla struggle is the pivot and the outcome. That day of reckoning draws nearer by the day, for there is no other way.

These are a few rationalizations or declarations of good intentions which doubtless leave the details of your criticisms and the letter of my texts unchanged. Unfortunately, I have neither of these at my disposal—neither your magazine nor my own writings. Nor have I any of the classics of Marxism-Leninism. I suppose the military censorship wants to save me from evil thoughts, heterodox as well as orthodox. But I remember something from my past reading and from my own writings and I hope I have presented a reasonably faithful picture of the real content of these minor texts. I do not at all wish to legitimize

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their entire content *a posteriori,* but only to restore them to their rightful and very modest place.

Revolution in the Revolution? would surely not have attracted your attention had it not been for the events in which I found myself caught up and imprisoned, the publicity which surrounded or distorted them, and above all the overwhelming shadow of Che. If I may allow myself to refer to him in this minor debate: if his reading notes are one day published, it will be seen that his judgment of this booklet is contrary to those of many: too timid for his liking and not radical enough but expressing his own views. As for the two articles on Latin America, they were written long ago alongside literary studies which, in deference to the bourgeoisie, I valued more highly at the time. It is unnecessary to stress that these are simply review articles—rough sketches intended for European readers. All this light baggage has never pretended, nor could it pretend, to be a body of "theses," rigorously deduced one from the other, an established system or the final definition of a "blue-print." With regard to revolutionary action, such terminology is so frightening that it makes one smile.

Dear Huberman and Sweezy, herewith the slightly disproportionate, wandering thoughts that came to me after learning with surprise of your number of the MONTHLY. I send them to you as they are, without intellectual shame.

One last, more personal, word. I have sometimes attacked your widely read and respected magazine pretty roughly. I want you to know that this was in a moment of disappointment shared by a number of your readers when they saw MONTHLY REVIEW reflecting the tendency which, at one time, was trying to spread doubt, confusion, and venom about what is purest in today's revolutionary movement. I think events themselves have reduced these unworthy quarrels to nothing. I owed you this explanation for a past which is out of date. Gone with the wind . . . *

Very cordially,

/s/ Régis Debray

* "Gone with the wind" is in English in the original, and the three dots are Debray's punctuation.—Ed.

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THE INDIAN REVOLUTIONARY POTENTIAL

BY KATHLEEN GOUGH

Peasant revolts in India have been historically less significant than in China, but during British rule they occurred more frequently than the Western literature suggests. Here I shall explore the character of peasant resistance in relation to political parties in Southern India, especially in Malabar, a region in the north of Kerala, and Tanjore, a district of southeast Madras.*[1]

Peasant resistance in the nineteenth century included spontaneous killings of landlords or higher officials, organized strikes, and armed movements to seize the land and establish peasant self-government. The biggest revolts were the Mappilla rebellions in Malabar of 1836-1898. Muslim tenants revolted twenty-five times, killing many Hindu landlords, British officials, and soldiers.

Such uprisings stemmed from the increasing exactions of the colonial economy. During the first two thirds of the 19th century the British instituted capitalist agrarian relations throughout most of India. Land became the personal, marketable property of former land-managers and revenue collectors. Landlords acquired the power to raise rents or evict tenants freely. Serfs and slaves became landless laborers. Cash crops were produced for foreign and Indian markets in response to the government's extraction of heavy cash revenues. In Tan-

* Footnotes will be found at the end of the article.

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jore's deltaic rice area, landlords began to sell grain to other regions, retaining just enough for their families and bond-servants. In Kerala the 19th century saw a great increase in population and a vast expansion of export crops—pepper, coconuts, lumber, cardamom, tea, and cashew nuts. Landlords forced more and more produce from their too numerous tenants, evicting them if they failed to pay their rents. Widespread evictions and severe famines preceded each of the Mappilla revolts. Tenancy Acts passed after 1887 gave increasing security to rich and middle peasants and non-cultivating middle tenants, but did little for poor peasants and landless laborers.

The first modern, politically sponsored revolt stemmed from the Khilafat movement of 1920-1921. Guided by the largely Hindu Indian National Congress and the Muslim League, Malabar's new middle class of students, rich peasants, and professionals encouraged cultivators and hand-mill workers to strike and to boycott British goods. The goals were support for Turkey's independence struggle and home-rule for India. When the British responded violently, Muslim poor peasants, heirs of the 18th-century rebels, seized knives, spears, clubs, and home-made firearms and drove out or killed six hundred Hindu *and* Muslim landlords, British officials, and police. Popular Muslim leaders assumed the government of 220 villages for several months. Congress leaders under Gandhi denounced the revolt and the British defeated it. About 10,000 died.

During the 1930's a gulf widened between right-wing Congressmen who wanted home rule with minimal internal changes, and left-wingers, often of Marxist persuasion. The latter formed unions of hand-mill, industrial and transport workers, peasants and plantation hands. In 1934 the left-wing Congressmen formed a Socialist Party inside the Congress, which dominated the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee until 1940.

These years saw intense political activity among middle and poor peasants. Under Marxist leadership, peasant strikes, demonstrations, and armed self-defense forced landlords to lower rents and abolish special levies. Many peasants came to believe that class struggle would culminate in management of the land by its cultivators, and of the country by the Marxists.

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By 1940 many Kerala socialists had become secret members of the Communist Party. The latter now tried to force independence from Britain's wartime administration through strikes, sabotage, and boycott of rents and taxes. They attempted to isolate the national bourgeoisie, encouraged the industrial proletariat to lead the struggle, and sought supporting actions from peasants, a number of whom died in armed clashes with the police. Opposed as always to violent uprising, the Congress and Socialist national leaderships expelled the Kerala socialists from their party. All of them then joined the Communist Party. Those Communists who escaped prison went underground, and the "proletarian struggle" petered out early in 1941.

Shortly after the Soviet Union entered the war, Indian Communists opted to support the war effort. Until the end of the war they refrained from militant struggles. Nonetheless, with Congressmen imprisoned, Communists expanded their influence and at war's end emerged in control of most of the unions.

In 1946-1947 revolts broke out in the Indian navy, many cities, and among the peasants of Bengal, Telangana, Tanjore, and Kerala. The Communist Central Committee did not support these revolts, its official policy now being to cooperate with the Congress in the transition to independence. District and village Communist leaders were, however, active in the revolts. In Telangana in the princely state of Hyderabad (now part of Andhra State), armed peasants seized 3,000 villages and administered them for six months. Communist-organized peasants similarly seized a block of villages in eastern Tanjore in early 1948. Over other large areas of Tanjore and Kerala, Communist and independent unions struck at harvest time, compelling landlords to halve rents and double wages. Landless laborers were formed into unions which allied themselves with those of poor and middle peasants. Communists attacked black-market profiteering by seizing grain and distributing it to the landless. In Hyderabad the revolutionary institutions were crushed by the Indian army, which invaded the state and an-

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nexed it to the Union in late 1948. Police put down the Tanjore and Kerala revolts and several dozen peasants were shot.

The South Indian Communists who guided the revolts of 1947-1948 were influenced by Chinese revolutionary theories, although their national leadership adhered to the Russian line of constitutional opposition. In 1948, the Communist Party's main line changed again to revolutionary upsurge led by the urban proletariat. The Party's theory still neglected the peasants: B. T. Ranadive, the Party's General Secretary, called Mao's ideas "horrifying," "reactionary," and "counter-revolutionary."[2] But in actual practice, Communist revolutionary action was more successful in the countryside than in the cities. Consequently, in mid-1950 a reconstituted Central Committee adopted the Maoist approach of revolution based on rural guerrilla warfare. By this time, however, the main revolts were crushed. The Nehru government was entrenched and the people were encouraged by the prospect of universal suffrage under a new, republican constitution. In 1951 the Communists switched to parliamentary opposition. They renewed their attempts to unite the workers, peasants, and "patriotic" bourgeoisie to develop an independent, mixed economy under electoral democracy.

Communists came to power in the state government of Kerala in 1957 with 41 percent of the vote. They were ousted by the Center in 1959 after right-wing Catholic and high-caste Hindu attacks had disrupted law and order over questions of land reform and education. Through its policies of land-ceilings, minimum wages, and welfare provisions the Party increased its support in all the propertyless classes. Throughout their seventeen years of parliamentary struggle the Communists have filed suits on behalf of tenants and laborers, led strikes and boycotts within the constitutional framework, and counselled peasants on their rights under the various land reform laws.

In 1964 Left and Right Communists split on the question of approaches to the Congress Party. The Right Communists support the Soviet Union, which gives aid to the Congress government and hopes for peaceful transition to socialism. The Left Communists in theory oppose Soviet revisionism and any compromise with the Congress Party, and give critical support to

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China. They foresee the possibility of armed revolution if the Indian government succumbs to American penetration and closes all avenues to constitutional and parliamentary struggle. Meanwhile, the Left Party continues to run in elections. In South India the Right Communists have weak support in the urban lower middle classes and in industrial unions; the Left Communists have much greater strength based on peasants and plantation and hand-mill workers. While bitterly opposing each other's ideologies, the two parties have formed electoral alliances in several states.

Communist-led United Front governments came to power in Kerala and West Bengal in the elections of early 1967. In Kerala the seven-party front experiences deepening trouble because of disputes between the parties and persisting food shortages. With 40 percent of its land under export crops, Kerala must import half its food, but the Congress Central Government has failed to maintain supplies. Kerala villagers consider twelve to seventeen ounces of rice an adequate daily diet. At present they receive only three ounces in ration shops and must buy whatever additional food they can at exorbitant market prices. Plantation and urban strikes, seizures of grain by bands of poor people, *ghereo* (mass encirclement) of cabinet ministers, government servants, and plantation and factory managers, and armed fights between political factions in villages have become common.

Meanwhile, serious divisions have arisen among Left Communists. In May, 1967, share-croppers and landless laborers revolted in the mountainous district of Naxalbari in West Bengal near the Sikkim and Chinese borders. Landlords refused to give up lands as they were required to do under the land reform laws, and sent armed bands against cultivators who tried to occupy the lands. Many of the cultivators were Santal tribes people, who fought back with bows and arrows. Workers on nearby tea plantations struck in sympathy. The resistance was led by local Left Communists. One policeman and ten peasants died. The Left Communist Minister of Land and Land Revenue tried to effect a compromise but was foiled by continuing battles between police and peasants. The revolt affected 42,000 people in

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70 villages, over an area of 80 square miles. The United Front government condemned it as adventurist and the Left Communist Party expelled the rebels. The police subdued the peasants, but a revolutionary framework has been maintained. The United Front government was itself ousted by the Center in November, 1967.

The rebel philosophy has since triumphed in the Left Communist Party plenum in Delhi, and spread to a number of Left Communist village and district committees in Andhra, Bengal, Orissa, Bihar, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtta, Mysore, Madras, and Kerala. Revolutionary coordinating committees have been formed in some of these states. Left rebels are aiding peasant resistance movements in Andhra and Bihar, and give ideological support to the independence wars of the Naga and Mizo tribes on the Burma border. Numerous revolutionary Marxists have seceded from the Left Communist Party; others, including four prominent Andhra leaders, have recently (June, 1968) been expelled.

The rebel approach includes: (1) peasant-based guerrilla warfare as the main path to revolution in India, with the assistance of the urban working class; (2) rejection of parliamentary participation as revisionist; and (3) an analysis of Indian society which sees the Congress government as the captive of American imperialism and India as already a neo-colonial state. This contrasts with the orthodox Left Communist view of India as under the class rule of the landlords and the bourgeoisie, led by the big bourgeoisie which, so far, is only "increasingly collaborating" with imperialism. The rebels' foreign and domestic policies are consciously derived from Mao Tse-tung. They reject the official Left Communist Party statement of August, 1967, which criticized Chinese condemnation of Indian Communist revisionism.[3]

It seems probable to me that much of the rebel Left Communist analysis will appeal to poor peasants and landless laborers in Kerala and Tanjore. In 1964 I found that support for the Left Communists had become virtually universal among landless laborers in Kerala and had increased among poor and middle peasants. This resulted from recent deterioration of food

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supplies and real wages and from the Communists' record of 1957-1959. On the other hand, there was a growing impatience in these rural classes and a wish to return to the militant actions of the late 1930's and 1940's. The same was true of Tanjore in 1951-1953, where I found that thousands of Untouchable landless laborers—about a third of the population—saw the revolts of 1948 as their high point and wished the Communists to organize them for further militant struggles. My field notes from both areas abound in statements by poor peasants and landless laborers that nothing will solve their problems except armed revolt against the landlords and sharing of the land among its cultivators. On British plantations, workers insisted that struggles for improved wages and working conditions were temporary. Eventually, they held, a Communist government must expropriate the planters and either divide the land among the plantation workers or run it cooperatively for their benefit. In 1964, many Communist Party members shared these views. Some complained about what one Left Communist called "this confusing, treacherous period of bourgeois democracy." Many admitted uneasiness over opportunistic electoral alliances and thought that eventually the Left Communists would be forced by repression to abandon the constitutional road and arm and organize the peasants. With this background, I was not surprised to read (in January, 1968) that a majority in four out of nine district committees in Kerala favor the rebel path.[4] The January, 1968, Party-plenums re-endorsed E. M. Sankaran Namboodiripad's Left Communist-led United Front government, but this unity is precarious. The all-India Left Communist Peasant Union President, A. K. Gopalan of North Kerala, has called for intensive organizing among the peasants, recruitment of peasant and worker volunteer forces, and psychological preparation of the peasants for a prolonged struggle against the landlords and the imperialists. With Indonesia as an object lesson, these measures may not be premature.

Having outlined events, let us attempt some conclusions.

First, there is plenty of potential and actual revolt among Indian peasants. The celebrated fatalism and resignation to the caste system are, in my experience, characteristics of the high-

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caste landlords and their retainers, not of the vast masses of poor peasants and landless laborers in modern times.

Second, when the Communists have coordinated the peasants without constricting them, peasants have followed 19th-century patterns by overthrowing the landlords, seizing the land, forming village committees, and removing or neutralizing local officials. The difference has been that the Communists have occasionally been able to link these revolts over wider areas and to infuse them with a revolutionary ideology and a new conception of the state.

Over the past 17 years, the Communists' pursuit of the parliamentary path has allowed them to attract more supporters in several states, notably Bengal and Kerala. It has, however, impeded the organization of peasants and workers for militant action. Canvassing for elections takes the village Communist away from day-to-day work among the poor. It causes even village Communists, let alone national leaders, to focus on budgetary problems, short-term reforms, and the arithmetic of seats and votes. As a result they neglect socialist education and the deeper ethical and political problems of class struggle. The policy of unity-from-above through electoral adjustments and alliances with non-revolutionary social democratic parties or non-socialist ethnic parties damages the potential for class unity, with clear ideological direction, from below. It makes peasants wonder about the sincerity of Communist analyses of the class struggle, and suspicious that the Communists, after all, are interested less in revolution than in power. When Communists have attained power at the state level their efforts to redistribute benefits have brought them the gratitude of the poor. But these efforts are too meager to make a substantial difference. Within the present constitution, Communist state governments cannot nationalize plantations, seize the estates of big landlords without compensation, or plan agricultural or industrial production. This means that they can compensate the propertyless only at the expense of the rich and middle peasants and the petty bourgeoisie, without increasing production. With the continuing stagnation of the Indian economy and the hopeless inability of many states to feed their people adequately, parliamentarism seems doomed

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to failure, and the rebel Communists' path the only hopeful alternative.

In many villages, peasants have ready-made bases for organization in their caste assemblies. These are groups of heads of households within one village, each confined to a single caste of related families, which have traditionally met to settle internal disputes. Traditionally, the different castes of Hindu peasants tended to hold different kinds of land-tenures deriving from the pre-British period, which kept their interests mutually opposed. Landlords came mainly from the highest castes, rich and middle peasants from upper-ranking peasant castes, poor peasants from lower, "backward" castes, and landless laborers from the lowest, highly segregated castes of "Untouchables" who were formerly serfs or slaves. Muslims and Christians preserved caste divisions similar to those of the Hindus. Increasingly in this century, however, the majority of peasants have sunk to the level of poor peasants or landless laborers. Thus, already during the late 1940's, the Communists were in some regions able to coordinate the caste assemblies of middle and low ranking castes in groups of villages to form unions for strikes and other militant actions. Similarly, on foreign-owned export-crop plantations, workers of the same street or barracks, in spite of religious and caste diversity, form assemblies for internal self-organization which can be used as bases for union organizing and militant resistance.

Traditionally, however, Communist Party members have tended to come from upper and middle castes and from the classes of small landlords, rich or middle peasants, and petty bourgeoisie, not from the lowest castes or from poor peasants or landless laborers. Some Communists hail from old landed families forced to the wall by modern capitalist farmers and merchants. Some, especially Brahmans, are literati who eagerly sought modern scientific education against the opposition of orthodox parents. Others—middle peasants, village merchants, or schoolteachers—saw no hope of advancement under the existing order with its backward-looking beliefs, elaborate caste ranking, and subservience to the wealthy who prospered from imperial rule. In the 1930's and 1940's, Communists in the countryside were best able to mobilize middle peasants as their

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closest followers, and have hitherto relied on the local leadership of this class. This, too, was natural: middle peasants were literate and knew about the wider society. They enjoyed greater autonomy than the poorest share-croppers and landless laborers, but experienced uncertainty and new kinds of exploitation in the market economy. From about 1947, as I have noted, the Communists did draw landless laborers into their struggles, but I would argue that they have never placed enough reliance on the potential leadership of poor peasants and landless laborers for fear of alienating the rich and middle peasants. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that the Communists (since 1964, the Left Communists) have drawn their greatest electoral support from areas where landless laborers predominate (Bengal, Kerala, Andhra, and Tanjore). In Tanjore and Kerala it is, to my knowledge, the lowest castes of landless laborers who, once aroused, most completely and consistently support the Communists.

Meanwhile the proportion of landless laborers and casual workers is rapidly increasing. Population expansion, slow industrialization, and the indirect effects of modern land reform laws combine to enhance this trend. In Kerala landless farm laborers and their families increased from 12.5 percent of the population in 1931 to 21.6 percent in 1951. The figure is much higher today, even excluding the hundreds of thousands of workers on foreign export-crop plantations. In Malabar, the proportion of landless farm workers to the total agriculturally dependent population increased from 38 percent in 1931 to 44 percent in 1951 and 47 percent in 1961. In one North Malabar village I found that the percentage of landlords and rich peasants in the total village population had dropped from 4.3 percent in 1948 to 2.6 percent in 1964. (One high-caste joint family had increased its ownership of village lands from 31.5 percent of the total in 1948 to 44.6 percent in 1964; the total estate of this family is now about 30 square miles.) The proportion of middle peasants, plus persons of middle-peasant rank who retained a little land and ran some other occupation, had fallen from 23.6 percent in 1948 to 9.2 percent in 1964. Poor peasants, who own or lease one garden but are obliged to hire themselves out for half of each day when they can,

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formed 36.7 percent of the villagers in 1964, as against 41.7 percent in 1948. At the bottom, by contrast, completely landless farm workers, casual laborers, and unemployed had increased from 29.3 percent in 1948 to 51.5 percent in 1964.

This startling increase of landless laborers has been noted by both rebel and orthodox Left Communists and may force changes in Communist policies. In a speech in February, 1968, to the all-India Left Communist Peasant Association, the President, A. K. Gopalan, stated that agricultural laborers now form 25 to 40 percent of the population in most states of India. Gopalan's conclusion seems warranted: "We have to make them [the landless laborers] the hub of our activity. Reluctance to take up their specific demands, fearing that this will drive the rich and middle peasant away from us, will have to be given up."[5] To be effective, however, this course will require Communists to turn their attention from the cities to the countryside, from electioneering to grass-roots organization, and from the literate and relatively mobile middle peasant to the often illiterate landless laborer and the specifics of his village situation.

In my view, the theories of the Left Communists are not presently conducive to a revolutionary perspective. Although they have broken from the Right Communists in order to fight the Congress Party, the Left Communists still see the Indian economy as a combination of imperial, feudal, and national capitalist elements. This approach, deriving from the Stalinist period, apparently sees each separate nation as necessarily evolving from feudalism (with or without imperial domination) through independent national capitalism to socialism. In this approach the "imperial" sector is seen to be composed of foreign companies and their Indian comprador associates; the "feudal" sector, of rent-collecting landlords and their tenants; and the "national capitalist" sector, of Indian industrial firms and those landlords and rich peasants who farm with hired labor. The immediate goal is seen as the expropriation of the foreign companies and the Indian monopolies, the removal of land from the big landlords and former princes, and the bringing into existence of a democracy of small peasant proprietors and small and medium industrialists.[6] Such a society would be governed by

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a party which represented the interests of the industrial workers and poor peasants and which would develop an increasingly broad state sector in heavy industry and trade.

I would argue, as A. G. Frank does for Latin America,[7] that such a dual (or triple) economy thesis is incorrect whether presented by Communist or liberal theorists.[8] There is no network of feudal relations in Indian agriculture, nor has there been since the British established private landownership within the framework of an international market economy during the 19th century. India is a country of capitalist relations and must be seen as part of the exploited, underdeveloped portion of world capitalist imperialism, locked through foreign investments and trade into expropriative relations with Britain, the United States, and other industrial capitalist nations. In spite of the sporadic retention of certain "feudal"-seeming customs such as debt-labor or special levies, modern tenant relations in the countryside are just as capitalist as wage-labor relations, for both place the cultivator at the mercy of forces operating in the interconnected markets for land, labor, and commodities. Further, although a class of Indian industrialists developed between the two World Wars, I am doubtful whether there is any truly independent national bourgeoisie in India today. It seems to me that American technological dominance, and the increasing dependence of India on United States private capital and government "aid," preclude such a development.

The most hopeful way forward for India is not therefore a "national democratic revolution" but a movement straight to socialism, a revolutionary movement that would root itself in the countryside where the bulk of India's wage earners and poor tenants—the main proletariat of the world economy—are to be found. Such a movement would base itself firmly on these rural classes, on urban workers in hand-mills, semi-processing industries, services and transport, and on the millions of unemployed. The social force and numerical strength of such a movement would be so great that it could afford to let the rich and middle peasants, the petty bourgeoisie, and the small industrialists relate themselves to it at will, without being obliged to make weakening concessions to their interests.

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The rebel Left Communists, under Chinese influence, seem to be moving in this direction. The rebels continue to base their analysis on a trichotomy of imperial, feudal, and capitalist elements; but they stress the neo-colonial character of India's economy, assign the big Indian industrialists (as well as the big merchants) to the "imperial" sector as comprador capitalists, stress the revolutionary potential of landless labor, oppose parliamentarism, and argue for armed struggles moving inwards to the cities from rural bases. Their approach therefore seems the most hopeful, provided they can avoid too mechanical a dependence on Chinese experience, and get on with the work of organizing and liberating the Indian countryside.

NOTES

1. There is a considerable literature for both regions. Useful books on Kerala are E.M.S. Namboodiripad: *Kerala Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow,* National Book Agency Private, Ltd., Calcutta 12, 1967; A. K. Gopalan: *Kerala, Past and Present,* Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1959; and A. S. Menon: *Kerala District Gazetteers,* Government Press, Trivandrum, 1962. For Tanjore see D. Sivertsen: *When Caste Barriers Fall,* George Allen and Unwin, 1963; A. Béteille: *Caste, Class and Power,* University of California, 1965; and J. F. Muehl: *Interview with India,* John Day Company, New York, 1950.

2. "Struggle for People's Democracy and Socialism," *Communist II,* June-July, 1949, p. 71.

3. For the rebel approach see *Liberation,* a monthly journal edited by Sushital Ray Chaudhuri, 60A, Keshab Chandra Sen Street, Calcutta 9, and for the official Left Communist approach, *People's Democracy,* the weekly organ of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), 33, Alimuddim Street, Calcutta 16.

4. *Link, New Delhi,* January 14, 1968, p. 13.

5. *People's Democracy,* Vol. IV, No. 6, February 11, 1968, p. 5.

6. E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *India Under Congress Rule,* National Book Agency, Calcutta, 1967, pp. 82-83: "The edge of this program is directed against monopoly capitalists . . . and big landlords. . . . The planned industrial development of the country will give vast opportunities to the non-monopoly industrialists to develop themselves. . . . This is not a program of building socialism straightaway. It is a program of full and radical democracy, complete elimination of all forms of pre-capitalist and monopoly capitalist institutions."

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7. A. G. Frank, "The Myth of Feudalism in Brazilian Agriculture," *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America: Historical Studies of Chile and Brazil,* Monthly Review Press, 1967.

8. Hamza Alavi uses a similar trichotomy in his interesting article, "Peasants and Revolution," *The Socialist Register,* edited by Ralph Miliband and John Saville, Monthly Review Press, 1965, in which he analyzes the Bengal and Telangana movements of 1946-48. Alavi also argues for a strategic role for the middle peasant. I am unable to accept these parts of his analysis, at least for Tanjore and Kerala, where middle peasants are disappearing as a significant social category and where it is impossible to separate empirically the "landlord-tenant" and the "rich peasant-hired laborer" sectors of the economy, or to separate either from relationships in which the middle peasant is involved.

In a community like ours, where property confers immense distinction, social position, honor, respect, titles, and other pleasant things of the kind, man, being naturally ambitious, makes it his aim to accumulate this property, and goes on wearily and tediously accumulating it long after he has got far more than he wants, or can use, or enjoy, or perhaps even know of.

—*Oscar Wilde, The Soul of Man under Socialism*

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RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN LATIN AMERICA

BY JAMES PETRAS

This is an addendum to the author's article ("The New Revolutionary Politics in Latin America") which appeared in last month's issue of MR.—Ed.

Recent developments in Peru (the military overthrow of President Belaunde) and the dismantling of the parliamentary facade in Brazil confirm the analysis presented in the previous issue of MR: the impotence of the bourgeois liberal democratic regimes and oppositions in Latin America and the militarization of political life. In Chile (November, 1968) as a result of right-wing pressure President Frei has forced the leading agrarian reformer, Jacques Chonchol, to resign: the prospects for change are weaker than ever.

In October, 1968, the impotence of the Belaunde government, exacerbated by severe financial difficulties and the disintegration of the Acción Popular Party, led to a military takeover. It is interesting to note that there was not a single strike or work stoppage reported in the whole of Peru in support of the deposed President—attesting once again the unreliability of the reports in the *New York Times* and *Newsweek* which have for the past four years always referred to Belaunde as the "popular elected reform-minded President." It is a testimonial to the subservience of Belaunde to U.S. business interests that even the generals who engineered the coup and were not particularly noted for their anti-imperialist sentiments could attempt to legitimize the coup by claiming to defend Peruvian sovereignty. The multi-million dollar tax write-off and payoff that Belaunde

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offered the International Petroleum Corporation, coming as it did after he issued a decree designed to attract multinational corporations, was more than even the Army could take. The *Alliance For Progress Weekly Newsletter* (September 2, 1968) reported that the decree "adjusts the tax structure to favor the establishment in Peru of multinational companies." Peru thereby became the first Latin American country to adopt such legislation.

The military take-over in Peru indicates the rise of a new style "right-wing nationalism," an ideology which has been up to now mainly a form of demagoguery. Now the right-wing nationalists may decide to oppose the total servility of liberals like Belaunde in order to obtain popular legitimacy—attempting to follow a "Gaullist" approach in foreign affairs. In summary, the failure of the Christian Democrats and latter-day populists in Chile and Peru and the resurgence of right-wing political groups in both countries is one aspect of the new developments in Latin America.

In Brazil the military dictatorship has undergone a new shift to the right. Between 1964 and 1967 the dictatorship of Castelo Branco attempted to eliminate all political opposition. These policies became counter-productive as many of the necessary professional and technical personnel fled, and U.S. officials were incapable of dealing with the complex situation. Brazilian business groups began to grow restive because of the government's favorable policies toward U.S. corporations. The middle class suffered from inflation and salary freezes. Costa e Silva attempted to loosen up the political system and allowed certain left liberal and bourgeois oppositionists a modicum of expression in hopes of obtaining their support. However, the students and other leftists soon became the focal point of opposition. The unpopular policies of the government soon rallied broad support for the opposition. Hence the recent wave of arrests, the outlawing of the bourgeois liberal opposition, etc. Once again in Brazil the practical alternatives are: right-wing authoritarianism or social revolution—there are no "third" or peaceful democratic ways.

Thus the foremost development in Latin American political

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life is the recent resurgence of right-wing political and military leaders. In Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, and Peru the military rules. More important they have no intention of following the previous policy of eliminating opposition to pave the way for a restructured parliamentary facade. The military no longer are mere guardians of the social order but have decided to rule directly over society.

Apart from the route of military coups, one group of right-wing political leaders is capturing popular support, reacting against the corruption and inactivity of liberal regimes. In Colombia the supporters of ex-dictator Rojas Pinilla have been building a mass base in the slum settlements, and he will be a very serious contender in the near future. Venezuelan ex-dictator Perez Jimenéz received 168,083 votes against 105,637 for Acción Democratica in the recent election in Caracas. Today the masses, lacking a leftist alternative, and finding the liberal status quo intolerable, are turning to the authoritarian paternalistic demagogic Right which promises morality (clean up the corrupt mess of the parliamentarians), protection (limit the rapacious exploitation of the poor by the oligarchy), and jobs (public works) through "strong personal leadership" (dictatorship). The "democratic revolutionaries" allocated state resources to benefit their middle-class clients at the expense of the urban and rural masses while forcing the Left into illegality. As a result they have created vast opportunities for the resurgence of the right-wing politicians of the 1950's. Many of Nixon's old friends from the Eisenhower years may be meeting him at next year's Hemispheric Conferences.

You victims of conscription!
You victims of the draft!
Mark well and act accordingly:
Where justice rules
And morals prevail,
Each one is free to be a martyr
Of his own ideals.
But no one shall be forced to die
For the ideals of others!
For this is murder.

—Diderot

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CORRESPONDENCE

BREZHNEV'S VIETNAM?

I find myself in essential agreement with both editorial statements on Czechoslovakia in the October MR. That the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia was a tragedy for the entire socialist movement, and that Soviet attempts to justify their invasion were pathetic to say the least, is evident. Yet there still is some legitimate disagreement about whether the course of events in Czechoslovakia was leading toward a gradual restoration of capitalism, or whether it was leading to a new and freer form of socialism.

Unfortunately, no one will ever know for sure whether the country would have gone capitalist or not. Any statement to either effect must be based largely on speculation.

Like many another revolution in that part of Europe, the Czechoslovak peaceful revolution of 1968 contained within it contradictory forces. The positive aspect of Dubcek's program consisted of the establishment of freedom of speech, of the press, and of assembly. The negative aspect consisted of the proposed increased reliance on "material incentives" and the expected growth of the income gap between intellectuals on one hand and workers in industry on the other. What must not be lost sight of is that the Soviet intervention was directed against the positive aspect of the Czechoslovak program, and not at all against the negative aspect. With half a million Soviet troops in the country, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of assembly are to be scrapped as counterrevolutionary, while piece work and speed-up are to be emphasized as the proper tools for the construction of communism.

The supreme irony, of all the many in this entire tragedy, is that the Dubcek government may very well find common ground with the Soviets on this basis, while the workers—toward whom the Soviet leaders had looked for support against Dubcek—will be driven more and more strongly into opposition. Prior to the August invasion, Dubcek's main support came from the intellectuals and

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students; the workers were often less than enthusiastic about his plan for reforming the Czechoslovak economy in such a way as to benefit only a minority of the population. Yet the workers rallied to his support when the Soviet Union carried out its illegal intervention in their country's internal affairs. But today, with political democracy abolished and with Dubcek accepting the presence of the Soviets as legal, any opposition raised by the workers to Dubcek's economic programs will automatically be interpreted as anti-Soviet activity by Moscow. Likewise, any opposition by the workers to the continued presence of the Soviet troops will be opposed by Dubcek, whose current hope is to avoid antagonizing his erstwhile enemies in the USSR. The statements made in support of Czechoslovakia's sovereignty by the Chinese—who nevertheless condemned both Brezhnev and Dubcek as "revisionists"—should not be minimized by any analyst of the situation.

The prospect now seems to be protracted resistance to the occupation by the Czechoslovak people—resistance which will drive the governments in Moscow and Prague closer and closer together. Perhaps Brezhnev will find his own Vietnam in Eastern Europe.

Richard Morrock

Brooklyn, N. Y.
October 1968

Young men: The lowest aim in your life is to become a soldier. The good soldier never tries to distinguish right from wrong. He never thinks; never reasons; he only obeys. If he is ordered to fire on his fellow citizens, on his friends, on his neighbors, on his relatives, he obeys without hesitation. If he is ordered to fire down a crowded street when the poor are clamoring for bread, he obeys and sees the gray hairs of age stained with red and the life tide gushing from the breasts of women, feeling neither remorse nor sympathy. If he is ordered off as a firing squad to execute a hero or benefactor, he fires without hesitation, though he knows the bullet will pierce the noblest heart that ever beat in human breast.

A good soldier is a blind, heartless, soulless, murderous machine. He is not a man. He is not a brute, for brutes only kill in self defense. All that is human in him, all that is divine in him, all that constitutes the man has been sworn away when he took the enlistment roll. His mind, his conscience, aye, his very soul, are in keeping of his officer.

No man can fall lower than a soldier—it is a depth beneath which we cannot go. Keep the boys out of the army. It is hell.

Down with the army and navy. We don't need killing institutions. We need life-giving institutions.

—*Jack London, International Socialist Review, October, 1913*

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WORLD EVENTS

By Scott Nearing

The Bleak Old Year

Over the year's end, as we went about, we heard a chorus of "Merry Christmas" and "Happy New Year." Our mail brought the usual grist of holiday greetings. Through it all, however, there was a certain lack of heartiness and surety, even a note of sad wistfulness.

As one visitor was leaving our farm, he and his party bade us "Merry Christmas" and "Happy New Year" in a tentative kind of way. In reply I said quietly: "You and I know that in far Asia young men, old men, women, and children are undergoing agonies of hardship and dying needless, planned, violent deaths. You and I as citizens of the United States are directly and criminally responsible for this. In the human family as a whole, about half its members are undernourished and a goodly number go to bed hungry, night after night." (Here I had to reword my sentence by "go to sleep hungry," as I remembered the multimillions who have no beds.) "And at this time we, in the richest country on earth, are engaged in a week-long orgy of gluttony and self-congratulation, while we waste enough food to nourish a small country." I might have added, like Scrooge, "Merry Christmas? Bah humbug!"

The departing visitors agreed shamefacedly. They knew the facts of world life as well as I did. The human race, in 1968-1969, is not so merry nor so happy as it would be if nature's stores were rationally shared and if abundance and well-being were as universal as they ought to be.

Among the Christmas greeting cards that came to the house there was one which read:

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What word for man? The circling year brings no reprieve:
The rice blighted, the jungle stripped, the house in flames:
The children maimed, death in the wind, hate unleashed in the armored streets;
Fear cold in the marrow, the ear unhearing, the eye unseeing.
What word for man this bleak year's end?

This sentiment portrays the human plight at year's end as accurately as anything that reached us through the mail.

All the News

During a recent journey into the Canadian Maritimes we faced a five-hour trip by ferry. The weather was foul and foggy, and we had not much reading matter along. I picked up a section of an old Sunday edition of *The New York Times* (September 15, 1968). At least it was half a section, which was in two parts: Part I Women's Wear and Part II Men's Wear. What a newspaper which operates under the rubric "All the news that's fit to print" has to do with women's and men's garments I do not know. I merely report the facts.

I also found Part I of the magazine section of the paper, which ran to 160 pages, including the covers. It was well printed, mostly in color. Its exact title: *The New York Times Magazine.*

I visualize a magazine as a printed document devoted largely to reading matter, often lightened with photographs and other graphic material.

The magazine in question did contain reading matter and pictures—20 full pages of it out of 160 pages. On 18 other pages there was one column of reading matter; on 33 pages two columns, and on 6 pages there were three columns. This partial-reading matter was discreetly scattered so that one would scan the whole magazine. The sequence ran like this: two full pages without reading matter, followed by a page on which there was one column of reading and photos; then a full page without reading matter, with two columns of reading matter on the next page.

What was on the non-reading pages? I give you two guesses. You hit the mark the first time. They carried advertising. In the 160 pages, 81, or half the magazine, were devoted entirely

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to advertising. Sixty of the remaining pages were devoted in part to ads; only one-eighth of the pages were free of advertising.

There is nothing illegal or unusual in such a make-up. In fact, it has become customary and is taken for granted. But the whole print job was mistitled. Instead of a magazine, this was a huckster's paradise of loudly-yelled slogans with just enough letter-press and pictures to pass it through the mails as a magazine.

"Defense" for an Aggressive Upstart

New Year's chimes on January 1, 1969 announced the continuance of the dog-eat-dog struggle for pelf and power which is the central preoccupation of human civilization. Specifically, they proclaimed that the United States of America has more wealth, more productive capacity, more of itself on wheels, and more immediately available destructive power than any other nation on earth.

Whatever holiday makers may have had in their minds during the 1968-1969 season of "glad tidings," wars and their aftermath had elevated Washington and had armed the President of the United States with enough wealth and nuclear destructivity to end human tenancy on the earth.

U.S. primacy was not set up overnight. It dated from two general wars that, among other results, bankrupted the British, French, German, Russian, Italian, and Japanese empires and helped to create a new power pattern.

As lately as 1941 British Prime Minister Churchill and United States President Roosevelt met at sea and set their names to an Atlantic Charter in which two things were taken for granted: first, that the Central Empires would be defeated and plundered by the united forces of Britain, the United States, and the USSR; second, that in the course of the conflict the Soviet Union would be so manhandled and weakened and perhaps dismembered that the British, with the help of the Americans, would be able to monitor and police the planet.

History did not follow the lines of the Atlantic Charter plan. Two years after the Central Powers invaded the Soviet Union, Jan Smuts, elder statesman of South Africa, gave a talk

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in London. Said he: when this war ends, there will be two powers in the world: one will be the United States; the other will be the Soviet Union. There will be no third power of comparable wealth, productivity, and military strength.

Many knowledgeable people, though startled by this prediction, took it seriously, because Marshal Smuts was believed to have much inside information and to use it wisely in forming his judgments. Another two years and the Potsdam Conference was signing, sealing, and delivering a document written in terms of the situation which Marshal Smuts had foreseen. The world of 1945 was a two-power world.

Meanwhile President Truman was saying that despite military cutbacks, the United States was the strongest militarily among the great powers. He was backed up by his successor, General Eisenhower, who spoke of the "awesome" striking power of U.S. military forces.

During the same years the Truman Doctrine, proclaiming that no nation anywhere would be allowed to go socialist-communist, showed that Washington had moved from a position of inconsequence to the summit among the great powers. A new star had appeared in the great-power firmament. In thirty years the United States had moved from near the bottom to the top of the international power pyramid.

(1) Every other important power of, say, the 1910 vintage, was either defeated, dismembered, and/or bankrupted. All except the United States were downgraded.

(2) Former colonials, winning independence of the European empires, began as sovereign republics to determine their own way of economic and cultural life.

(3) A third of mankind turned to the arduous task of building socialism of the Soviet pattern, while an almost equal number declared socialism to be their goal but set out to reach it by parliamentary means rather than by direct seizure of power.

How could the richest, most productive, and best armed among the nations fit into this revolutionary world situation? First and foremost, it must try to counter the revolution. Such an objective could be attained only with the consent of the American people. If they did not consent knowingly, they must

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at least remain discreetly unaware and inert while the operation was in progress.

Disposing of potential home-made opposition to the imperial ambitions of the U.S. oligarchy proved to be a full-time job of brainwashing and drugging that occupied the years after 1946. When the job was far advanced, early in the 1960's, the military-industrial complex could run the country without interference from any opposition group or party. It was in the saddle politically and economically, and it proposed to stay there indefinitely. As far as the complex was concerned, elections had become an expensive formality while the rich and powerful gathered up more riches and concentrated more power in their own hands.

Internationally, the United States was staking out its proposed imperial domain, providing for its defense, mobilizing its allies, and preparing to meet the mortal enemy—socialism-communism. Advocates of "fortress America" sought to limit defense to the Western Hemisphere; more aggressive councils prevailed, however. The "defense" line of the United States was drawn on the East through Western Europe, on the West along the island chain which guards the Asian mainland. The Atlantic and the Pacific became American oceans, patrolled by American ships and planes. United States land forces established permanent bases in Europe and Asia.

Henceforth the "defense" of the United States was to begin in Europe and Asia. If wars were fought, they (like the wars of 1914 and 1939) must not be fought on American soil. That heavy burden was assigned to Europe and Asia.

Concentrations of wealth and power signify the existence elsewhere of poverty and oppression. Wealth and poverty, power and subservience, separated those who had from those who had not. The United States oligarchy headed and spoke for the "haves." Such a relationship gives the "haves" who are rich the chance to take still more from the "have nots" who are poor. It also tempts the "have nots" to help themselves by looting the accumulated wealth of the "haves."

Domestically and internationally, wealth and power were redistributed. As the struggle proceeded the chasm between the

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"haves" and the "have nots" widened and deepened, still further upsetting the planetary balance and opening the way to new survival struggles that might well end in chaos. All this in the name of "defense."

Stop Thief!!

Power redistribution has its limits. At some point the game must come to an end while the winners pocket their gains and the losers lick their wounds and search for small coins in empty pockets.

Wilson, Lloyd George, Clemenceau, Orlando, and Makino thought the limit had been reached in 1918. Lenin disagreed. Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin thought things had gone far enough in 1945. Mao disagreed.

The years from 1949 to 1969 make up one of those periods of uncertainty when some cry "Stop, thief!" while others insist on just one more round of power grabbing.

Power struggle in 1968 left many sore spots and rough edges, power surfeits, and power vacuums. Nineteen sixty-eight was an unsettling year in terms of power. There is every indication that 1969 will see more of the same.

The Space Age

Ten years ago, in 1959, man was entering the Space Age. In that year the Atomic Energy Commission, the Commerce, Interior, and Agriculture Departments, and the National Science Foundation spent $59 million on space projects. Success of the Soviet Union's Sputnik led to the explosive expansion of space spending by the Washington government from $1.2 billion in 1962 to $2.5 billion in 1963, $4.1 billion in 1964, and $5 billion in 1965. In subsequent years it has maintained this level.

From 1959 to 1968 space-program expenditures have totalled about $30 billion. By comparison with the average family budget $30 billion sounds like a lot of money. But currently Washington is spending $25 to $30 billion each year on a brush-fire war in Vietnam. Against this background the $30 billion spent over a decade of space exploration does not seem excessive.

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(*Continued from inside front cover*)

Note that these articles are *not* digests made by editors, in the manner of the *Reader's Digest,* but original articles written by the authors themselves. If any readers are interested in participating in this series, please let us know, if possible sending an offprint of the scholarly article to be condensed.

MR subscribers know of the advantages to be derived from membership in MR Associates from the annual appeal letter that goes out every September, as well as from back-cover ads in later issues. But they may not realize the extent to which these advantages are *increasing* because of the expansion of MR Press's book publishing program. For details, see the full-page ad on page 40 of this issue.

We have been asked to announce the initiation of a new Isaac Deutscher Memorial Prize to be awarded each year to a work which contributes to the development of Marxist thought. The sponsor's announcement states:

"The Prize, to the value of £100, will be awarded by a jury drawn from among the sponsors. The jury will consider works published or submitted in typescript. It is also proposed to connect the award, whenever possible, with a lecture by the recipient of the Prize. Typescripts should be submitted by 1 May; the award will be made in the latter part of September of the same year. The first Isaac Deutscher Memorial Prize will be attributed in September 1969.

"In order to ensure the continuity of the Prize, we are inviting contributions to a permanent Fund, either by donation or by Banker's Order to be addressed to The Isaac Deutscher Memorial Prize, Lloyd's Bank, 68 Warwick Square, London, S.W.1."

We have recently learned with regret of the death of George Stuart Gelder in London at the age of 62. Together with his wife Roma, Mr. Gelder was author of MR Press book *The Timely Rain: Travels in New Tibet,* a first-hand account of post-revolutionary Tibet and a book which, in our judgment, deserves much more attention than it has received.

We are planning to publish in an early issue an excellent analysis of Iran's land reform which originally appeared in *Iran Report,* the organ of Iranian students in the United States and Europe. In the meantime, we would like to call attention to the trial of political prisoners which was recently held in Teheran, resulting, according to a Reuters dispatch of January 15th, in the conviction of 14 men accused of a Communist plot. As a U.S. neo-colony, Iran is sensitive to public opinion in this country, and protests addressed to the Iranian Embassy in Washington can be effective. More information can be obtained from Iran Report, c/o Iranian Students Association, G.P.O. Box 1693, New York, N. Y. 10001.

From time to time we receive bequests from readers who felt, in their lifetime, that financial support would help make possible the continuance of MR as a completely independent magazine. Any reader who may wish to follow this example should be careful to state exactly, in his or her will, that the bequest is to: "Monthly Review, Inc. of 116 West 14th Street, New York, N. Y. 10011."

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